

Immediate Release

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Updated Drought Order for Kansas Counties Triggers Emergency Use of Water

Topeka – Drought conditions continue for much of Kansas and expand into additional counties which has led Governor Sam Brownback to update the Drought Declaration for Kansas counties with **Executive Order 11-37**. The update includes moving 13 counties from warning status up to emergency status and adding six other counties to watch status.

“Continued dry conditions have led to a Drought Emergency declaration for 13 additional counties,” Governor Brownback said. “Three-quarters of Kansas counties are well below normal in available soil moisture because of below normal precipitation patterns and drying conditions. Stream flows and lake levels also are being affected.”

The updated drought declaration also moves six counties into watch status. Tracy Streeter, Director of the Kansas Water Office and Chair of the Governor’s Drought Response Team recommended drought declaration update.

“Water supply conditions continue to decline in many areas, Emergency stage triggers the Kansas Water Office (KWO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) which allows emergency use of water from certain state fishing lakes by contracting the Kansas Water Office,” Streeter said. “This will allow small communities and individuals within the emergency counties category to pump water from named state fishing lakes if they are in dire need of water”.

Individuals and communities need to contact the Kansas Water Office for a water supply request prior to any withdrawals from lakes. They will in turn be referred to the appropriate KDWP office to obtain the necessary permit to withdraw the water. The MOU limits the types of water use and a fee may be set for use of the state fishing lakes’ water supply.

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"We are glad to be able to offer this as an option to Kansans in desperate need for water," KDWPT Secretary Robin Jennison said. "The priority order established for this MOU is domestic, municipal and then livestock uses, while also protecting the lake's fish population."

The following state fishing lakes available for withdrawals for Emergency Declared counties include Atchison, Barber, Brown, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Clark, Crawford, Goodman, Jewell, Kingman, Leavenworth, Lyon, Pott#1, Pott#2, McPherson, Miami, Mined Lands (Pits), Neosho, Osage, Ottawa, Saline, Scott, Shawnee, Sheridan, Washington, Wilson, and Woodson State Lakes.

This Executive Order shall remain in effect for those counties so identified until rescinded by Executive Order or superseded by a subsequent Executive Order revising the drought stage status of the affected counties. Effective immediately:

- Declare a Drought Emergency, Warning or Drought Watch for the counties identified below;
- Authorize and direct all agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor to implement the appropriate watch or warning level-drought response actions assigned in the Operations Plan of the Governor's Drought Response Team.

The Governor's Drought Response Team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans. For more detailed information about current conditions, see the Kansas Climate Summary and Drought Report on the Kansas Water Office website at: www.kwo.org

County Drought Stage Declarations:

Drought Emergency: Barber, Barton, Clark, Comanche, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Kingman, Kiowa, Lane, McPherson, Meade, Morton, Pawnee, Pratt, Reno, Rice, Sedgwick, Seward, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner

Drought Warning: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Crawford, Elk, Gove, Greeley, Greenwood, Hamilton, Labette, Linn, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Montgomery, Neosho, Ness, Scott, Trego, Wallace, Wichita, Wilson, Woodson

Drought Watch: Cheyenne, Decatur, Dickinson, Ellis, Ellsworth, Franklin, Geary, Graham, Lincoln, Miami, Mitchell, Morris, Norton, Osage, Osborne, Ottawa, Phillips, Rawlins, Riley, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Wabaunsee

Counties in green are new to the emergency list. Counties highlighted in yellow are new to the watch list.

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As the state's water office, KWO conducts water planning, policy coordination and water marketing as well as facilitates public input throughout the state. The agency prepares the KANSAS WATER PLAN, a plan for water resources development, management and conservation. KWO also reviews all water laws and makes recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for needed legislation.